the State Governments and will be placed on the Table of the House as early as possible.

**Supply of Gold to Exporters of Gold Jewellery**

5335. DR. C. SILVERA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Bank of India has stopped the supply of gold to exporters of gold Jewellery; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the action taken by the Government to resume the supply?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) and (b). There was temporary suspension of supply of gold by India Government Mint, Bombay to the State Bank of India for about 4 weeks during July-August, 1991 for some administrative reasons. Supply of gold has since been resumed with effect from 19th August, 1991.

**Export of Steel Products**

5336. SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the export of steel products increased during April-June, 1991;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent to which export and production of steel increased in comparison to the last two years; and

(d) the target fixed for the remaining months of the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). Authentic data on steel exports has not yet been published by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Calcutta. Available data on exports of steel by main producers (i.e. SAIL and TISCO) during the period April-June, 1991 compared to the corresponding periods over the last two years is as follows:

Exports by Main Producers (SAIL & TISCO) (April-June)

| Financial year (April-June) | Quantity (in tonnes) |
|---|---|
| 1989-90 | 22,670 |
| 1990-91 | 59,400 |
| 1991-92 | 85,250 |

(c) Exports by SAIL and TISCO during April-June, 1991 increased by 43.5% and 276% over the corresponding periods of 1990-91 and 1989-90 respectively. Total production of finished steel in April-June, 1991 increased by about 11.5% and 13.9% over the corresponding periods of 1990-91 and 1989-90 respectively.

(d) The Working Group on Iron & Steel for the 8th Plan had projected a possible

export target of 8.75 lakh tonnes for the year 1991-92.

*[Translation]*

**Increase in Prices of Cement**

5337. SHRI SIMON MARANDI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Committee has been constituted to check the increasing prices of cement; and

(b) if so, the recommendations contained in the report submitted to the Government by the said Committee and the details with regard to their implementation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) A working Group has been constituted to consider measures and work out a scheme for holding the price of cement.

(b) The report of the Working Group is awaited.

*[English]*

**Negotiations with USSR for Newsprint**

5338. SHRI S.B. SIDNAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation visited USSR for negotiations in regard to supply of newsprint;

(b) if so, whether the delegation met the Soviet authorities and had a number of discussions with them;

(c) if so, whether any agreement was reached with them;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the Soviet Union has agreed to supply newsprint to reduce the shortage in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c). Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e). Against the Trade Plan Provision of supply of 70,000 MT of newsprint from USSR for the year 1991, STC concluded a contract in April, 1991 for import of 22, 830 MT Standard Newsprint when a delegation from Russia had visited New Delhi. A delegation from STC visited Moscow during July, 1991 to settle the price for the quantities to be supplied during July-September 1991 and to discuss other issues. For balance 47,000 MTs no firm commitment has been indicated by USSR.

**Official Delegations Sent Abroad**

5339. SHRI RAM NARESH SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of official delegations sent abroad during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the expenditure incurred by the Government on those delegations during the last three years separately in rupees and in foreign exchange, year-wise; and

(c) whether the Government are taking any measures to cut down such expenditure during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE): (a) and (b). The information is not centrally maintained and will have to be collected from all Ministries/Departments/Offices of the Government of India. The time and labour involved in collecting the information may not be commensurate with objective to be achieved.